

**shale gas:** Natural gas trapped deep underground in tiny bubbles dispersed throughout formations of shale, a type of sedimentary rock. It is often extracted by hydraulic fracturing.

**hydraulic fracturing:** A process to extract shale gas, in which a drill is sent deep underground and angled horizontally into a shale formation; water, sand, and chemicals are pumped in under great pressure, fracturing the rock; and gas migrates up through the drilling pipe as sand holds the fracture open. Also called hydrofracking or simply fracking.

**policy:** A rule or guideline that directs individual, organization, or societal behavior.

**public policy:** Policy made by governments, including those at the local, state, federal, and international levels; it may consist of legislation, regulations, orders, incentives, and practices intended to advance societal welfare.

**environmental policy:** Public policy that pertains to human interactions with the environment. It generally aims to regulate resource use or reduce pollution to promote human welfare and/or protect natural systems.

**tragedy of the commons:** The process by which publicly accessible resources open to unregulated use tend to become damaged and depleted through overuse. Term was coined by Garrett Hardin and is widely applicable to resource issues.

**free rider:** A party that fails to invest in conserving resources, controlling pollution, or carrying out other responsible activities and instead relies on the efforts of other parties to do so.

**polluter-pays principle:** Principle specifying that the party responsible for producing pollution should pay the costs of cleaning up the pollution or mitigating its impacts.

**revolving door:** The movement of individuals working in the private sector to government agencies or vice versa. May create conflicts of interest.

**legislation:** Statutory law passed by a legislative body.

**regulations:** A specific rule issued by administrative agency, based on the more broadly written statutory law passed by Congress and enacted by the president.

**executive orders:** Specific legal instructions for a government agency issued directly by the president.

**regulatory taking:** The deprivation of a property's owner, by means of a law or regulation, of most or all economic uses of that property.

**public trust doctrine:** A legal philosophy that holds that natural resources such as air, water, soil, and wildlife should be held in trust for the public and that government should protect them from exploitation by private interest. This doctrine has its roots in ancient Roman law and in the Magna Carta.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** A U.S. law enacted on January 1, 1970, that created an agency called the Council on Environmental Quality and requires that an environmental impact statement be prepared for any major federal action.

**environmental impact statement (EIS):** A report of results from detailed scientific studies that assess the potential effects on the environment that would likely result from development projects or other actions undertaken by the government.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** An administrative agency of the U.S. federal government charged with conducting and evaluating research, monitoring environmental quality, setting standards, enforcing those standards, assisting the states in meeting standards and goals for environmental protection, and educating the public.

**globalization:** The ongoing process by which the world's societies have become more interconnected, linked in many ways by diplomacy, commercial trade, and communication technologies.

**customary law:** International law that arises from long-standing practices, or customs, held in common by most cultures.

**conventional law:** International law that arises from conventions, or treaties, that nations agree to enter into.

**United Nations (UN):** Organization founded in 1945 to promote international peace and to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.

**World Bank:** Institution founded in 1944 that serves as one of the globe's largest sources of funding for economic development, including such major projects as dams, irrigation infrastructure, and other undertakings.

**European Union (EU):** Political and economic organization formed after World War II to promote Europe's economic and social progress. As of 2016, the EU composed of 27 member nations.

**World Trade Organization (WTO):** Organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, that represents multinational corporations and promotes free trade by reducing obstacles to international commerce and enforcing fairness among nations in trading practices.

**nongovernmental organizations:** An organization not affiliated with any national government, and frequently international in scope, that pursues a particular mission or advocates for a particular cause.

**command-and-control:** A top-down approach to policy, in which a legislative body or a regulating agency set rules, standards, or limits and threatens punishment for violations of those limits.

**green tax:** A levy on environmentally harmful activities and products aimed at providing a market-based incentive to correct for market failure.

**subsidy:** A government grant of money or resources to a private entity, intended to support and promote an industry or activity. A tax break is one type of subsidy.

**emissions trading:** The practice of buying and selling government-issued marketable permits to emit pollutants. Under a cap-and-trade system, the government determines an acceptable level of pollution and then issues permits to pollute. A company receives credit for amounts it does not emit and can then sell this credit to other companies.

**cap-and-trade:** An emissions trading system in which government determines an acceptable level of pollution and then issues polluting parties permits to pollute. A company receives credit for amounts it does not emit and can then sell this credit to other companies.