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**‘A New Progressive Agenda for Public Health and the Environment’**  
*New Book from Center for Progressive Regulation Maps  
Ambitious Environmental Agenda*

Washington, DC --- Promising fresh approaches to environmental policymaking, the Center for Progressive Regulation this week launched its latest book, *A New Progressive Agenda for Public Health and the Environment*. Edited by CPR Member Scholars Rena Steinzor and Christopher H. Schroeder, and published by Carolina Academic Press, the book critiques the Bush Administration’s assault on environmental protections and sets forth a number of new and innovative policy proposals.

The book was a collaboration among nearly 20 CPR Member Scholars. A 12-page summary of the book is attached and available on CPR’s website at [http://www.progressiveregulation.org/NPA\\_501.pdf](http://www.progressiveregulation.org/NPA_501.pdf). Among the proposals in the book:

- The dirtiest manufacturing facilities are often located in low-income and minority communities, a problem compounded by a lack of affordable health care and adequate nutrition. Congress should strengthen civil rights laws to outlaw such environmental discrimination, eliminating requirements that intent be proved, and instead concentrating on the disparate effects of such practices and activities.
- Current information gaps regarding toxic chemicals are appalling. We lack sufficient information about 80 percent of the high-production volume toxic chemicals sold each year. Congress should establish an impartial Bureau of Environmental Statistics charged with closing the data gap, creating guidelines for collecting environmental data, collecting and analyzing comprehensive statistics on environmental quality, and disseminating the results.
- The Bush Administration champions “devolution,” a phrase that in the environmental context is too often deployed as camouflage for federal abdication of enforcement obligations. State governments may be “closer to the people,” but they’re also closer to home-state industries, and generally less equipped and sometimes less willing to enforce the law. Congress should require EPA to shine a spotlight on state environmental agency performance by means of regular and public evaluations of how well state agencies are meeting their obligations, based on a uniform set of criteria.
- The National Environmental Policy Act requires environmental impact assessments whenever the federal government does something that could produce a major effect on the environment.

Congress should extend the reach of the law to cover private corporations, since that's where most pollution originates.

- We need to get the environmental cops back on the beat. There are so few inspectors and prosecutors that corporate scofflaws routinely ignore pollution control requirements, not only ruining environmental quality, but putting those companies that are good citizens at a competitive disadvantage.
- Every so often, some large company is forced to pay out a settlement or fine to pay for cleaning up past pollution. Typically, average stockholders and mutual fund managers are caught completely unaware, and take a hit. Liability for pollution is a very real consideration in making investment decisions, or at least should be, so companies should be required to disclose promptly, accurately, and fully the nature, extent, and impact of any corporate activity or practice that poses a significant threat to public health and the environment, whether or not the activity is regulated. Congress should pass such a law.
- In the context of so-called “advertorials” or “corporate image ads,” companies under fire for poor environmental or labor practices have invoked their ostensible First Amendment rights to evade prohibitions on deceptive and unfair advertising. Those prohibitions are a cornerstone of the free market, protecting consumers and ethical competitors. The courts must reject claims that the First Amendment shields anyone from compliance with deceptive and unfair advertising prohibitions.

Rena Steinzor is a Professor of Law and Director of the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Maryland School of Law. Christopher H. Schroeder is a Professor of Law and Public Policy at the Duke University School of Law. They are both members of the board of directors of the Center for Progressive Regulation.

Founded in 2002, the Center for Progressive Regulation is a nonprofit research and educational organization of university-affiliated academics with expertise in the legal, economic, and scientific issues related to regulation of health, safety, and the environment. CPR supports regulatory action to protect health, safety, and the environment, and rejects the conservative view that government's only function is to increase the economic efficiency of private markets. For a copy of the book, or for more information on the Center for Progressive Regulation, contact Matthew Freeman at 301-762-8980, or at [mfreeman@progressiveregulation.org](mailto:mfreeman@progressiveregulation.org). Visit CPR on the web at [www.progressiveregulation.org](http://www.progressiveregulation.org).

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