

Protecting Ecosystem Services: Science, Economics, and Law; Salzman, James; Thompson, Barton H. Jr.; Daily, Gretchen C.

Protecting Ecosystem Services:
Science, Economics, and Law

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I. INTRODUCTION

By most measures, modern American environmental law has been a great success. With few exceptions our air is cleaner, our water purer, than in 1970.¹ Despite these achievements, however, the last decade has witnessed repeated calls for a significant shift in regulatory emphasis. The top managers and scientific advisors in the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have consistently declared that maintenance of productive natural systems demands more attention and should, in fact, become one of the agency's highest priorities.² In recommending that reduced

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1. Passage of the Clean Air Act is often considered the start of the modern era of environmental law, representing the advent of national, uniform pollution control standards. *See, e.g.*, U.S. ENVTL. PROT. AGENCY, EPA-454/R-95-011, NATIONAL AIR POLLUTANT EMISSION TRENDS, 1900-1994, ES-1 to ES-5, 3-1 to 4-5 (1995) (presenting and discussing trends in emissions of several major air pollutants); Office of Water, U.S. Envtl. Prot. Agency, *Clean Water Act: A Brief History*, <http://www.epa.gov/owow/cwa/history.htm> (describing water quality major improvements in twenty-five years since passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972).

2. *See, e.g.*, U.S. ENVTL. PROT. AGENCY, EPA/600/R-98/086, ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY E-1(1998) (noting that "[e]cosystems provide valuable renewable resources and services such as . . . water storage and flood control" and acknowledging "great interest in