

# The government vs. the environment essay sample

[Environment](#)



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After reading “ Eco-Defense”, written by Edward Abbey, (348), it is obvious that some men and women are willing to do anything to protect the environment they live in. The opening paragraph compares protecting the American wilderness by the same means a person would use to protect his or her family and property. He is insinuating that everyone should put their lives on the line to protect the wilderness. This is not accepted by the general public. A rational person would not allow themselves or anyone they care about to die for a resource that could be ultimately naturally replace over time. In the case of fossil fuels it would take many generations to replace, but it would happen. Nonviolent protest is a better way to handle big business. There are, however, the extremists that are driven to prove their point by putting themselves in danger and those who follow them. This is selfish and an irresponsible way of thinking. Many environmentalists blame the federal government for not protecting the wilderness in this country. The author of “ Eco-Defense”, Edward Abbey, was born on January 29, 1927, and died March 14, 1989. Abbey was born in Pennsylvania and grew up moving around the east coast most of his child hood.

He joined the army during World War 2, where he served two years and was promoted twice and demoted twice for refusing to salute an officer. (Croke) Edward Abbey is known for writing fiction, nonfiction and essays about the wilderness and protecting it. In “ Eco-Defense” Abbey writes, “ With bulldozer, earth mover, chainsaw and dynamite the international timber, mining, and beef industries are invading our public lands—property of all Americans—Bashing their way into our forests, mountains, and rangelands and looting them for everything they can get away with.” (348) Here is

appealing to the emotional side of the audience to get their feelings moving and thinking about the terrible business man destroying the wilderness for his or her own capital gain. Whether people believe it or not, the cars that are driven all around the world and the homes that people live in all come from nature and the wilderness.

Someone is cutting down trees to build homes and another big business is mining somewhere in the world to be able to make the steel that the vehicles being driven can be manufactured. Abbey talks about sabotage in “Eco-Defense” (348) Eco-Defense classified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as terrorist crimes against society. In an interview by KAET-TV in Phoenix, Arizona, Abbey was asked what he thought about the sabotage being committed by the group EarthFirst, he responded, “ Well I’m not going to advocate sabotage publicly on the federal airwaves here. But I think there probably will be more of it if the conflict between conservation and development becomes more intense, and if the politicians fail to follow the popular will on the matter. I think a lot of people are going to become very angry and they’re going to resort to illegal methods to try to slow down the destruction of our national resources, our wilderness, our forests, mountains, deserts. What that will lead to I hate to think. If the conflict becomes violent and physical then I’m pretty sure the environmentalists will mostly end up in prison or shot dead in their tracks.

So I hope we can save what’s left of Arizona and the United States by legal, political means and I still think we can. I still vote in elections...even though there doesn’t seem to be much to vote for or against, when there’s not much choice. I think if enough people get sufficiently concerned, why we can still  
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make changes...needed changes in this country by political methods...God, I hope so.” (Abbey, Personal Interview) Abbey speaks of the government breaking down with the following statement, “ Our legislators do not represent the public, the voters or even those who voted for them but rather the commercial industrial interests that finance their political campaigns and control the organs of communication—the TV, the newspapers, the billboards, the radio. Politics is a game for the rich only.”

(348) The author also calls out the western senators that do not supposedly support bills to protect our national forests or the untouched wilderness. Senator McCain is one of the elected officials that Abbey calls out. According to the League of Conservation Voters Scorecard the elected officials mentioned in Abbey’s essay are Senator Dennis DeConcini (D), Arizona, forty four percent; Senator Barry Goldwater (R), Arizona, nine percent; Senator John McCain (R), Arizona, twenty two percent; Senator Orrin Hatch (R), Utah, eight percent; Senator Edwin Garn (R), Utah, eleven percent; Representative James Hansen (R), Utah, eight percent; Senator Malcolm Wallop (R), Wyoming, twelve percent life time voting records on environmental bills. In 1985, when Abbey’s Essay “ Eco-Defense” (348) was written, the United States House of Representatives voted on the average of forty seven percent in favor of environmental bills.

There were two states that had the lowest averages, they were Alaska and Wyoming, both with a sixteen percent favorable voting percentage. There was one state with the highest average of eighty four percent of voting favorable for the environment. The percentages are based on the nineteen environmental related bills that were presented to the House of

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Representatives in 1985. (League of Conservation Voters Scorecard) But one must realize that when it comes to bills that go before the Congress the bills do not only have one specific part to them. A bill for the environment may have other amendments attached to it such as road construction funding for roads in Yellowstone national park that would disrupt the natural wilderness. This is what people do not understand when it comes to these votes, the main idea of the bill is great for the environment but the amendments have nothing to do with the environment and the whole bill is not passed.

Unfortunately the environment is what suffers from the ludicrous way our government works and eventually the humans of this country will suffer in the long run, not just from enjoying the beauty of the wilderness but what it offers to the health of the human race. Many of the quote unquote eco-terrorists in this country do have a legitimate cause to follow. But the way these groups go about things is illegal in any and every state. Peaceful protests are the way to go, not destruction of property. Think about this, if a group commits arson or uses explosives to try and get the point of their cause into the public eye and gain the public's favoritism, all the group is doing is causing more harm to the environment. This can happen by the amount of lumber and other building materials it will take to rebuild what they destroy. And also a lot of times other things are harmed, like the animals in the area of the attacks.

The smoke can hurt the animals and the actual fire could spread to the surrounding areas and become out of control spreading to neighboring areas. Nothing good comes from violence. A lot of times the government thinks about the economy and creating jobs. From the House Subcommittee <https://assignbuster.com/the-government-vs-the-environment-essay-sample/>

on Energy and Mineral Resources, " Opening up the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for drilling would generate 1. 2 million jobs annually across the country, \$8 trillion in economic output to the GDP, \$2. 2 trillion in total tax receipts and \$70 billion in additional wages each year." (Lamborn) On the surface this sounds like the best way to fix the current problems in this country. One thing to think about is; what about the impact on the fishing industry? There are many groups in this country and worldwide that try to protect the ecosystem of the water ways and oceans. This is commendable in many ways.

From personal experience, in 1994 with the organization Green Peace, this organization follows US Navy supply ships around to try to get in the way of their missions, by pulling up alongside of them and disrupting them. On this one particular instance a Green Peace vessel came up alongside the USS Supply (AOE-6). The vessel that the demonstrators were in was trailing a large amount of diesel fuel behind them. This was kind of ironic because they were there to protest the oiler and accuse the Navy of spilling fuel into the water and hurting the ecosystem in the area. In the end, the US Coast Guard came on site, arrested the crew of the boat and impounded their vessel for polluting the coastal waters off of Florida. The lesson given in this example is to make sure that the cause one is fighting for is not being hurt by the means that is being used to deliver the message. Green Peace is a very good organization and has done a lot of great things for the environment.

This is just one instant that the means didn't justify the cause. In the closing paragraph of " Eco-Defense" the author states, " Eco-defense is risky but sporting; unauthorized but fun; illegal but ethically imperative." (348) He <https://assignbuster.com/the-government-vs-the-environment-essay-sample/>

also talks about the spiking of trees. " Tree-spiking is accomplished by driving large bridge timber spikes deep into a tree. A second spike is used to drive the first out of sight into the tree. The second spike is then removed. Some mills are starting to use metal detectors to save their equipment and employees, radical environmentalists get around this by using ceramic spikes." (Miller) This shows the disregard for the law and he expresses an immature side by thinking being endanger is fun and sporting. This discredits the author's claims of sensibility and the need to do whatever it takes to protect the wilderness. Dave Foreman, who operates Earth First located in Tucson, Arizona, was quoted as saying, " We've failed if a spiked tree gets to a saw mill." Mr. Foreman also conceded that the threat of destroying sawmill machinery also brings with it the threat of injury to sawmill workers.

He admitted that he has never been inside a sawmill. Asked if his group has tried to work with millworkers instead of endangering them, he said attempts at solidarity between millworkers and environmentalists always fail." (Miller) No matter how this statement is translated, the message is quite clear.

Extreme environmentalists and or eco-terrorists do not care about human life just the environment. Many environmentalists blame the federal government for not protecting the wilderness in this country. The environmentalist groups in this country have very good intentions but sometimes go about it the wrong way.

The environment is important to protect but not at the cost of human injuries or the loss of one's life. The federal government can only do so much.

Congress can vote every day and all day on any kind of environmental bill presented to them. Even if the congress passes, with a one hundred percent

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vote, all the bills and laws that come before them, if the general public does not agree with the laws that are passed by our elected officials then the environment will continue to suffer and our natural resources will be depleted long before they can be replenished by the replanting of trees, for example, or by natural means.

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