

Case study 2



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Summary of the Case

Ocean Policy is related with the policy of government regarding dumping of wastes in ocean. The policy of government regarding ocean dumping has been changing according to the demand of political situation of the country. There has been a debate in the ocean dumping policy over a long period of time from between the parties who were in favor of ocean dumping and those who were against it but Federal Ocean Policy went through a considerable change during the President ship of Ronald Reagan. Eventually United States changed its strategy from ocean protection to ocean management.

During 1970s quite a few environmental laws and regulations were framed with an effort to control ocean dumping. President Nixon addressed to Congress on banning of unauthorized and harmful waste dumping on the ocean. Subsequently Environmental Protection Agency passed a bill to the Congress which resulted in formation of Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act 1972. It established a permit system for ocean dumping with a view to end all oceans dumping by 1975. EPA along with the Army Corps of Engineers began to issue permit for dumping of waste in ocean.

On October 15, 1973, the EPA issued its final regulations and criteria's for ocean dumping which were strict and highly restrictive. It aimed at terminating all oceans' dumping regardless of the permit issued to the applicant. It led to a highly protective approach to ocean dumping. But the

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scenario changed in 1980s when New York City authorities filed a suit in a federal district court against EPA on the rejection of its application on dumping waste in the ocean. The verdict was delivered in favor of city and the power of EPA to terminate ocean dumping was limited. As a consequence of the verdict EPA adopted a more flexible rules regarding ocean dumping and viewed ocean as an authorized disposal option of dumping wastes.

Factors which contributed towards the change in the ocean policy are:

- 1) Scientific study which led to the conclusion that ocean dumping posed only moderate environmental threat as compared to other threats to the ocean environment like Gulf Oil disasters.
- 2) Change in the socio cultural attitude of people due to factors like inflation, oil embargo, and increased energy consumption tempered the enthusiasm of people concerning environment.
- 3) The change in the administration with the President ship of Ronald Reagan led EPA to move away from confronting intergovernmental relations and to comply with federal stance towards municipal sludge dumping.

Key Issues Regarding Change in Ocean Policy

The key factors which led to the change in the ocean policy are as follows:

- 1) The election of Ronald Regan as the President of US led to change in the ocean protection policy of US from ocean protection to ocean management.
- 2) The passing of bill by EPA to Congress which resulted in formation of MPRS Act 1972 also changed the ocean dumping policy. A more strict dumping system was followed and permit system was started for dumping of wastes.
- 3) The third and the most important issue regarding the change in policy was the rejection of the permit of New York City by EPA.
- 4) The verdict in favor of New York City also contributed to the change.

Stating position with respect to Ocean dumping

Ocean dumping should not be allowed liberally. Strict rules regarding dumping of wastes should be adopted by the government. There is already enough pollution in the water world due to various oil tragedies like the Gulf Oil tragedy which resulted in huge emission of oil in the water. Government should permit only dumping of those materials which are bio-degradable and not hazardous to water life. Wastes which are to be dumped should first be recycled and purified as far as possible to avoid dumping of any hazardous wastes in the water.

Doing so would not only result in less water pollution but also animals like whales, white sharks, and other endangered species of water world would also be saved from becoming extinct.

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