

Air quality and climate change as integrated policy narrative essay

[Environment](#), [Climate Change](#)



Environmental policies largely influence the way humans interact with the environment. Policies targeting air quality, namely the Clean Air Act, have been effective in lowering the emissions of pollutants; however climate change is still something that concerns some scientists, citizens, and policymakers. As such, the need for further progress is necessary. In order to make such progress policymakers may need to develop air quality and climate change policies through an integrative approach. Doing this, however, does not come without political, social, and scientific obstacles.

Although there are obstacles to recognizing integrative approaches for policymaking, air quality and climate change may be addressed simultaneously, less costly, and more effectively by using such an approach. Air quality and climate change are interrelated and, as such, policies should be developed through an integrative approach. The federal government's approach to climate change policy has included only voluntary measures thus far. This conservative approach has failed to address climate change effectively (Dale, 2011).

Policy making is both time- and cost-extensive. Therefore addressing air quality and climate change separately prolongs the policymaking process and increases the costs associated with that process. As greenhouse gas emissions affect air quality and climate change, an integrative approach to developing policies may result in timelier, less cost extensive policies that better address both issues. Air quality and climate change are interrelated, thus policies that address both issues simultaneously may provide better health, economic, and environmental benefits.

Air quality and climate change are influenced by common air pollutants. As such, focusing on one pollutant to improve air quality may increase or decrease other pollutants that affect climate change (Thambiran & Diab, 2011). The complex interaction between air quality and climate change makes it nearly impossible to create a win-win situation. If a policy addresses air quality, but the impacts of the policy on climate change is overlooked, the desired benefits may vanish.

Air quality management emission standards are designed to decrease anthropogenic sources of air pollutants, and it is expected that the emission decreases will lead to better air quality. Such policies are aimed at improving air quality, assuming that climate will remain constant. But scientists suggest future climate change is likely to impact meteorological factors that affect air quality, thus making it necessary to consider air quality and climate change to avoid unexpected outcomes (Thambiran & Diab, 2011).

An integrative approach to air quality and climate change policy making may generate better health, economic, and environmental benefits. The benefits of an integrative approach to air quality and climate change may seem obvious, but realizing such an approach does not come without political, social, and scientific obstacles. Politicians hold differing views about how to manage air quality and climate change. Not all politicians believe that climate change is an issue, despite scientific evidence, but most agree that air quality is an issue.

Socially, citizens are divided much like politicians, but often rely on the media for information about the reality of climate change. To further

complicate the issue, scientists are in disagreement about the validity of climate change. In every layer of society, agendas and motivations heavily influence the support or opposition to a given piece of legislation. The many political, social, and scientific obstacles come as a result of such a controversial issue, which makes it difficult to develop an integrative approach to air quality and climate change.

Maintaining a fragmented approach to air quality and to climate change causes problems for everyone. As with any successful system, all parts must function properly and simultaneously in order to achieve maximum performance. Fragmented is defined as existing or functioning as though broken into separate parts; disorganized; disunified (IAC Companies, 2012). Maintaining a fragmented approach to air quality has delivered successes, but a united effort is necessary to ensure everyone is equally protected from air pollutants.

Climate change, however, cannot be maintained with a fragmented approach. Global uniformity is imperative to mitigate climate change, and if cannot be addressed globally, it cannot be managed at all. Attempts locally will not provide adequate results, thus anything less than a global effort creates a problem. Because air quality and climate change are interconnected, maintaining a fragmented approach to either issue creates problems for everyone. Policies that target individual behaviors can be effective in addressing climate change and air quality.

Incentives provided by local, state, and government actors are good examples of how policies influencing individual behavior can help mitigate

climate change. Individuals are beginning to voluntarily change behaviors that contribute to poor air quality and climate change. These changes are making a difference, so it is rational to believe that policies targeting individual behaviors will effectively address air quality and climate change. Air quality and climate change policies should be developed through an integrative approach.

The benefits of this approach includesaving moneyand providing timelier, more effective results. Political, social, and scientific obstacles must be dealt with to realize an integrative approach to managing air quality and climate change. Fragmented approaches to air quality and climate change pose problems for everyone. Voluntary measures being taken by individuals are yielding positive results. It is therefore rational to develop policies that target individual behaviors.

Although there are obstacles to recognizing integrative approaches for policymaking, air quality and climate change may be addressed simultaneously, less costly, and more effectively by using such an approach.

Reference

1. Dale, L. (2011). Environmental Policy. San Diego: BridgepointEducation, Inc.
2. IAC Companies. (2012). Retrieved from Dictionary. com, LLC: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>
3. Thambiran, T. , & Diab, R. D. (2011). The case for integrated air quality and climate change policies. Elsevier EnvironmentalScience& Policy, 1008-1017.