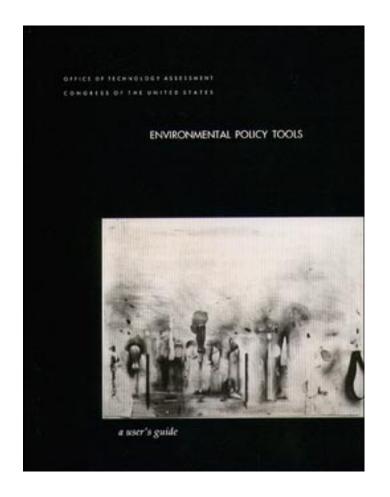
#### Environmental Policy Tools: A User's Guide

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### Foreword

oncerns over the costs of pollution control and the persistence of some pollution problems have fueled criticism of how the nation is pursuing its environmental protection goals. In particular, interest in policy instruments that utilize or improve market forces, while not new, has grown considerably over the past decade. Yet this interest continues to be met with confusion—and sometimes unrealistic expectations—about what these approaches can accomplish in some instances, and with suspicion over whether they can offer meaningful protection. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works asked the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to help Congress sort out the often conflicting claims about the effectiveness of major policy instruments.

The assessment looks at a range of regulatory and nonregulatory instruments, both the old standbys and less commonly used approaches. The "ideal" instrument would move the nation toward a cleaner environment, be as cost-effective and fair as possible, and accommodate increasingly rapid changes in science and technology. Finding an instrument to satisfy all of these objectives at once has seldom proved possible in the past—and may be even more difficult in the future. But whether Congress prefers to specify the choice of policy tool itself or delegate the choice to states, localities, or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), someone is faced with the difficult problem of matching tools to problems.

This "user's guide" presents a framework to help decisionmakers narrow down the choice of instruments for addressing a particular problem. First, the report describes 12 policy tools, and how and where they are currently used. Based on state, federal, and international experience as well as theoretical literature, OTA rates the relative effectiveness of these tools in achieving each of seven criteria often considered in environmental policymaking. Given a decisionmaker's preferences among the criteria and the characteristics of a particular problem, this framework draws attention to those instruments that might be particularly effective—or used with caution.

OTA appreciates the generous assistance of the project advisory panelists, reviewers, contractors, and other individuals who contributed ideas and information for this study. Their suggestions and advice were extremely valuable.

ROGER C. HERDMAN

Director

### ERRATA --- ADVISORY PANEL FOR

#### **Environmental Policy Tools: A User's Guide**

In the printing of this report, OTA inadvertently omitted the page listing the Advisory Panel to the study. OTA deeply regrets this error and apologizes to the individuals who gave such valuable service during the course of the project. As with all OTA projects, the Advisory Panel does not necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse the report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the content and accuracy of all its reports. We do, however, appreciate the thoughtful comments and suggestions of the Panel.

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**Note:** OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the reviewers. The reviewers do not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

# Abbreviations

BACT Best Available Control Technology BADCT Best Available Demonstrated Control Technology BAT Best Available Technology (Economically Achievable) BCT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Demonstrated Available Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Demonstrated Available Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Conventional Technology BDAT Best Available Control Technology BDAT Best Available Technology BDAT Best Available Control Technology BDAT Best Available Technology BDAT Best Demonstrated Available BDAT Best Available Technology BDAT Best Demonstrated Available BDAT Best Demonstrated Available BDAT Best Available Technology BPA Bothewise Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability BCAC California Aresource Substances Control BCAC California Aresource Board BCACM Bescarch and Development Provention Incentives for States BACM Resource Aresonably Available Control BCAC Technology BCACM BCAC Reasonably Available Control BCAC Technology BCACM BCAC Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Resource Advisory Board BCACM BCAC Resourc	AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan	NEPP	Netherlands' National Environmental
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		Assistance		Institute
	NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality	USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
			VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds