

Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Around forty years ago countries across the world began making strides to clean up nearly a century's worth of pollution from industrial growth. Domestically, the United States passed sweeping legislation to clean the air and water. Abroad, the European Economic Community adopted its first environmental policy to enhance free trade and address pollution that knows no political borders. And as time and technology progressed, twenty-four countries signed a protocol that would eventually be universally ratified and that would not just slow, but reverse the growth of the hole in the ozone layer. Nations across the world have worked to improve the environment not only for its own sake and as a legacy to future generations, but also to improve human health.

Despite these efforts, recent events remind us that just because the sky is blue and the water is potable it does not mean we have won the fight for the environment. Our staff article on recent environmental health disasters reminds us that without a constant push to improve government oversight of potentially hazardous activities, another disaster like those experienced recently in West Virginia, North Carolina, and Bangladesh could be right around the bend.

We must keep an eye on traditional industrial activities as well. Natural resource extraction practices like gold mining and hydraulic fracturing may threaten our drinking water as Alexandra Manea's article on gold mining in Romania and Stephanie Kurose's feature article on fracking in the United States point out. Without appropriate government intervention, these practices can debilitate the health of the communities where they are situated.

As technology continues to advance and exciting innovations make life easier and more productive, uncertain costs associated with those benefits creep into the picture. As articles by Genna Reed and Baskut Tunkat highlight, genetically modified organisms and chemicals may keep food fresh longer or make for impressive packaging, but we need to be weary of the potential adverse impacts of these products on human health and regulate their use accordingly.

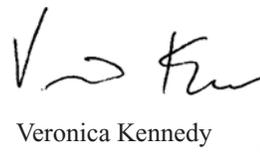
This issue of *Sustainable Development Law and Policy* is not intended to provide a pessimistic outlook on the status of environmental health today. Rather, we hope to re-focus the public's

FEATURES:

- 12 | THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
by Maggie Coulter
- 21 | THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS AND LACK OF REGULATION: GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD LINKED TO RISE IN AUTISM PREVALENCE
by Victoria H. Peters
- 35 | WHEN BIG OIL COMES TO A SMALL TOWN: THE EXXONMOBIL OIL SPILL IN MAYFLOWER IN CONTEXT
by James D. Hekel Jr.
- 43 | REQUIRING THE USE OF TRACERS IN HYDRAULIC FRACTURING FLUID TO TRACE ALLEGED CONTAMINATION
by Stephanie Kurose

attention on the impact our environment has on our health and the health of future generations. Together, we can continue the work of our predecessors to promote a healthy environment for every person on earth. The articles in this issue serve as a starting point for further exploration and debate because they highlight gaps in regulation where our health may be in jeopardy.

As always, on behalf of my staff, I would like to thank our authors for contributing enlightening scholarship on public health and the environment. I would also like to thank my staff for their continued work to make our publication a leader in addressing sustainable development law and policy.



Veronica Kennedy