

# **Implementation Mechanisms and State-Compliance of North American and European Transboundary Air Pollution Treaties**

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Over the course of my Bowdoin career, I have found my passion for international environmental law and politics. This Summer, I have enjoyed the opportunity to study treaty law and state-compliance within international environmental agreements. I examined the process of treaty formation, factors for whether states ratified these treaties, the operating mechanisms within the agreements binding states to certain actions, and the degree to which states met their obligations. I focused my studies on five agreements: the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution's Helsinki, Sophia, and Oslo Protocols (1985, 1988, and 1994 respectively); the 1989 Montreal Protocol; and the 1991 US-Canada Bilateral Agreement. By covering a range of bilateral, regional, and global treaties renowned for their success, I sought to identify trends in what compelled states to ratify and comply with air pollutant emissions reductions.

Following my review of the treaties, governmental memos and public statements, news articles, and scholarly sources, I discovered that behind each successful treaty were patterns of political, economic, and scientific developments and relationships. Most notably, the snowballing of public pressure following scientific developments would increase environmental activism and diplomatic leadership within democratic nations' governments and industries. When this pattern occurred within states with an abundance of political and economic power (U.S., U.K., Germany) and other similarly powerful nations lacked a unified countermovement against the treaty within their government, these environmentally-driven states successfully leveraged trade and political relationships to compel and coerce other states into environmental treaties. The activities of international governmental organizations, including the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Union (EU), were essential for increasing transparency of state interests around environmental agreements and facilitating scientific discussions and collaborations. The promised development of economically-feasible alternatives for large pollution emitters was also a common factor for state-ratification (ex. low-sulfur coal and nuclear energy replacing high-sulfur coal and DuPont's CFC alternatives replacing CFC chemicals).

I would like to use this research as the basis for my Senior Honors Thesis. My topics of interest include how additional environmental treaties fit the aforementioned pattern of public interest influencing powerful democratic nations; the success of states and associated international and non-governmental organizations weaponizing public pressure in sovereign states for environmental agendas; and the extent that funding from developed states and flexibilities for meeting emission reductions encourages developing states to ratify and comply with environmental treaties.

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