

How Government Can Promote Sustainability

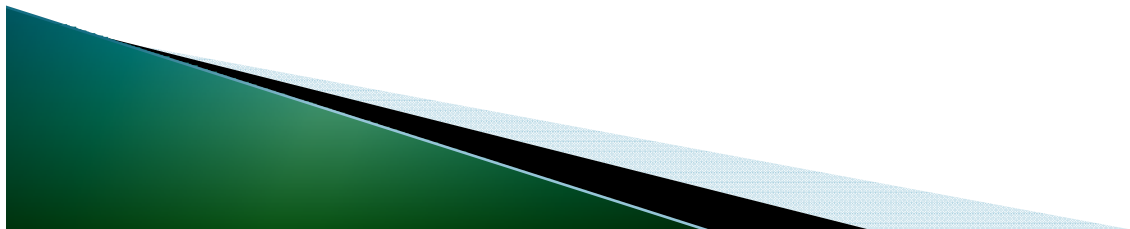
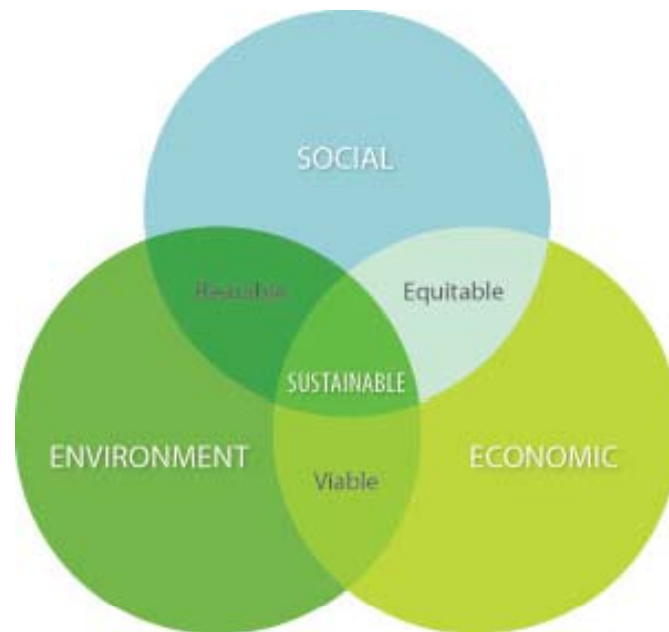
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“Sustainability”

- ▶ “Sustainable: conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources” (*Oxford*)
- ▶ “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (*Brundtland Commission, 1987*)
- ▶ “Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.” (*EPA*)

Three Pillars of Sustainability



Challenge for Government

- ▶ Regulatory Paradigm: Environmental laws emphasize control rather than prevention and create silos of interests and authority.
- ▶ The social and economic aspects of sustainability are not part of rule-making process.
- ▶ Many of our priority issues today are not necessarily tied to a single permitted point source.

Multimedia Challenge

- ▶ The result is an inherently limited regulatory system that does not adequately address multimedia or complex issues.
- ▶ Separate laws for each medium and media-based Board make multimedia decisions more challenging
- ▶ Regulatory system has limitations and can limit innovation.

Performance-Based Programs

- ▶ Sustainability Paradigm: Reaction to the notion that the regulatory approach does not sufficiently encourage efficiency, flexibility, innovation or continuous improvement
- ▶ Typically outside of the regulatory framework (e.g., voluntary)
- ▶ Basic element of these programs is an EMS, which should consider all three pillars of sustainability and emphasize results and continuous improvement

Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP)

- ▶ Non-regulatory, multimedia initiative aimed at improving environmental performance
- ▶ Three levels of participation (E2, E3, E4) based on the level of EMS development
- ▶ Started in 2000
- ▶ Sustained compliance required
- ▶ Currently about ~450 participants from industry, government, commercial and non-profit sectors
- ▶ New sustainability-oriented track in pilot phase now (VEEP Sustainability Partners)

EPA Sustainability Programs

- ▶ EPA's Performance Track (discontinued in 2009)
- ▶ Sustainability and the U.S. EPA/“Green Book” (National Academy of Science, 2011)
- ▶ Other sector or pollutant focused programs such as AgStar, Clean Diesel, Coal Combustion Products Partnership, Design for the Environment, EnergyStar, Green Power Partnership, Green Racing, GreenChill, Labs 21, SmartWay Transport Partnership, etc.

Sustainability Opportunities for Companies

- ▶ Stewardship Action Council
- ▶ VEEP
- ▶ Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

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