Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act Encyclopedia Article

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act.....3

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act

Although officially named the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, this statute is better known by its common name, the Ocean Dumping Act. An amendment known as the "Ocean Dumping Ban Act of 1988" significantly superceded certain aspects of the original act. The Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act arose from international treaty commitments, specifically negotiations resulting in the London Convention of 1975. Signing states agreed to take measures to prevent marine pollution and particularly to ban the dumping of identified toxins that could not be rendered harmless by natural processes. The statute's enactment also addressed the chronic and previously unfettered ocean dumping of municipal garbage, and industrial and commercial wastes, which by the 1970s was devastating marine ecosystems and fouling coastal beaches.

The Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act regulates the disposal of any material in the U.S. territorial sea or contiguous zone, regardless of its point of origin; and the marine disposal anywhere of wastes and other material that originated in U.S. territory (expansively defined) or was transported on American vessels or aircraft. Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the designated lead agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has statutory responsibilities, and enforcement often requires the services of the U.S. Coast Guard. Citizen plaintiffs may also sue to enforce the act. Unlike the case with many federal environmental statutes, states enjoy only a limited and generally advisory role. For marine disposals governed by the act, a permit is required. The disposal of high-level radioactive wastes, medical wastes, and radiological, chemical, or biological warfare agents is banned. Permits for various toxins, including mercury, cadmium, and halogens known to be carcinogens, mutagens, or **teratogens**, generally will be denied, unless present only in trace amounts or compounds known not to bioaccumulate.

For the most part, the act has been successful within U.S. waters, as evidenced by significantly cleaner coastal areas and more robust marine ecosystems since the 1990s. A series of public scares arising from medical wastes that washed up along the eastern seaboard in the late 1980s prompted greater scrutiny of coastal dumping and more exacting tracking mechanisms for the disposal of medical waste. The penalties for ocean dumping of medical wastes are much harsher than those for other violations.

Internet Resource

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Web site. "Ocean Dumping Ban Act of 1988." Available from http://www.epa.gov/history.