

“The Reality of Precaution: Risk Regulation in the US and Europe”

Friday, March 25, 2011

Resources for the Future (RFF)
1616 P Street, NW, Washington DC 20036
7th Floor Conference Room

The “Precautionary Principle” has sparked the central controversy over European and U.S. risk regulation. *The Reality of Precaution: Comparing Risk Regulation in the United States and Europe* (RFF Press/Earthscan, 2011) is the most comprehensive study to go beyond precaution as an abstract principle and test its reality in practice. This groundbreaking resource, including 20 chapters and 600 pages by 27 expert authors, combines a dozen detailed case studies of a wide array of US and European regulation of health, safety, environmental, and security risks over the past four decades; a broad quantitative analysis of relative transatlantic precaution regarding nearly 3,000 risks; and cross-cutting chapters on politics, law, and perceptions. The authors rebut the rhetoric of divergence or reversal in European and American approaches to risk regulation and show that the reality has been general parity, combined with the selective application of precaution to particular risks on each side of the Atlantic. They also find a constructive exchange of policy ideas leading toward “better regulation.” The book offers a new view of precaution, regulatory reform, comparative policy analysis, and transatlantic relations.

For book details and ordering information, please visit:

<http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?TabId=102266> .

This symposium will present the findings and implications of this new book and debate the future of regulation and transatlantic relations.

8:30 Registration & light breakfast

9:00 *Welcomes and introduction* –
Phil Sharp, President, RFF
Jonathan Wiener, Duke University and RFF University Fellow

9:10 *Session 1: The Reality of Precaution – Overview*

Chair, the transatlantic debate over precaution, and our project –
Michael Rogers, independent consultant, formerly in the Group of Policy
Advisers, European Commission

The cases of ozone, climate, energy, and air; and a broad quantitative analysis
– James Hammitt, Harvard University and Toulouse School of Economics

The cases of chemicals and terrorism; and key findings of our project –
Jonathan Wiener, Duke University and RFF

10:00 Break

10:15 *Session 2: Further Case Studies of Relative Precaution*

Chair, and the case of risk assessment methods –
Gail Charnley, HealthRisk Strategies

The cases of genetically modified foods, and mad cow disease –
George Gray, George Washington University

The case of information disclosure for environmental risks –
Peter Sand, University of Munich

11:00 Break

11:15 *Session 3: Better Regulation and Transatlantic Relations*

Chair and introduction – Jonathan Wiener, Duke University and RFF

C. Boyden Gray, former US Ambassador to the EU

William Sleath, office of the Secretary-General, European Commission

Richard Morgenstern, RFF and former director of policy analysis, US EPA

12:30 *Box lunches*

Open discussion over lunch

2:00 *Adjourn*