



Development of Environmental Policy in China

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With the continued social and economic development in China, environmental policy has been evolving correspondingly. In the 1970s, China's environmental policy was initiated, mainly focusing on "Three Industrial Wastes" and "End-of-Pipe" Pollution Treatment. From the 1980s to 1990s, China's environmental policy system was preliminarily formed, putting forward clearly that economic, urban/rural and environmental construction should be planned, implemented and developed simultaneously, and that the principle of "Three Simultaneousness and Three Unifications", which is the integration of economic and social benefit with environmental benefit should be followed. Three fundamental environmental policy systems including "Precautionary Principle, Integration of Prevention and Control", "Polluters Pay" and "Enhancement of Environmental Management" as well as eight regulations, such as "Environmental Impact Assessment" were established. All these have laid a solid foundation for the further development of China's environmental policy.

Since entering the 21st Century, China's environmental policy has been developing innovatively under the guidance of Scientific Outlook on Development. Three historical transformations were put forward: namely transformations from undue preference/emphasis of economic growth over environmental protection to equal attention to the two; from a state that environmental protection lags behind economic growth to one that the two develop at the same time; from sole dependence on administrative measures to an integrated approach that applies diversified tools, including regulatory, legal, economic, technological and necessary administrative ones. Nowadays, environmental carrying capacity has become an important basis for regional economic distribution, environmental management an important tool for structure adjustment, environmental standard an important condition for market access and environmental cost an important factor for price formation. In the future, China's environmental policy should place more emphasis on the integration of total emission load control of main pollutants, improvement of environmental quality, prevention of environmental risk with the protection of public environmental rights and interests, so that economic growth and the people's wellbeing can be improved through more scientific environmental policies.