



## *Vantage Point*

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# WHAT CAN I DO?

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September 11, 2001 destroyed lives and changed the world. We reevaluated and rededicated. We struggle to answer questions and reconcile new priorities and perspectives with life's realities. But deadlines and commitments are back.

I practice environmental law. In my professional world, minute concentrations and modeled results take on great significance. Of course, the impacts of September 11 and the risks it revealed are actual and not measured in parts per billion. Trying to relate September 11 to my everyday life has been unsettling. What I do seems small and irrelevant. I try not to kid myself. Compared to piecing together a shattered family or fighting terrorism, what I do *is* small and irrelevant. In that comparison, most things are. So I ask myself, what can I do? How can I come to terms with September 11 without resigning myself to an inconsequential everyday life?

I can remind myself that in everyday life I am not only an environmental lawyer, but also a father, husband, son, brother, nephew, uncle, friend, colleague, church member, neighbor, citizen, and many other things. I can regard and conduct myself as *all* those things, and reach out to help those around me, whatever the need. Surely, helping someone as a husband, friend, or neighbor is bigger and more relevant than much of what I do professionally.

I can understand that what I do professionally is a luxury. Many countries cannot address environmental concerns, because basic needs like food and medicine take all their resources. I can be thankful for our country's good fortune, and that in our good fortune, we value responsible environmental stewardship.

I can remember that while some people in the world have radically different values from mine, those are *not* the people I deal with every day. Policymakers, regulators, interest groups, opposing counsel, clients, other litigants, and I share essential common values. The fact that we don't share the same political or economic views, strike the same balance, or feel the same passion does not mean we are *fundamentally*

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at odds. It should be clear to me now that my legal or political "adversaries" are not my *enemies*. I can zealously advocate my client's interests *and* treat adverse parties with respect and even appreciation.

Finally, I can continue to try to get it right. Goethe said: "Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least." I can keep trying to arrange my life around this idea. And, I can hope and believe that at some point, when I look back, I will see that even though I often got it wrong, trying to get it right made a difference.

*Anonymous*

**H**ow many of us have asked, "What can I do?" This special issue of *Natural Resources & Environment*, "Security: Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources in a Changed World," is born of our Section's desire to make some useful contribution in response to the tragic events of September 11. The *NR&E* Board of Editors has solicited and assembled articles, columns, and an interview focused on environmental, energy, and natural resources security that we sincerely hope will be of use to all of us as we consider our new national paradigm. We accelerated the production process using an "all hands" effort and our authors wrote their articles in one-third the time usually allowed in order to publish it as our next *NR&E* issue produced after the horrific attacks. Nearly 1,000 complimentary copies are being mailed to local, state, and federal public officials and other potentially interested parties. The entire magazine also is posted at [www.abanet.org/enviro/pubs/nre/specissue/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/enviro/pubs/nre/specissue/home.html) to make it accessible to all who might find it useful.

I am personally grateful for the diligent and skillful efforts of the twenty volunteer members of the *NR&E* Board of Editors who gladly gave extra effort to expedite this issue. I must also thank our twelve very special authors for producing excellent articles on a very "fast track." On behalf of the leadership of the ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, the *NR&E* Board, and our authors, our highest hope is that you will find some part of this special issue uniquely useful. It is the least and best we could do.

*Steve McKinney*  
*Executive Editor*