

Reading Response 2

I found the reading fascinating, especially the discussion around the role of benefit-cost analysis (BCA) in environmental regulation. The idea that redistributing regulatory priorities could save lives at a lower cost is compelling, but it made me think about the broader implications for how policies are evaluated. I wonder if focusing solely on economic efficiency might sideline important equity issues, particularly for communities disproportionately affected by environmental hazards.

What struck me was the balance between cost-effectiveness and fairness. While BCA seems like a logical approach for maximizing benefits, the text acknowledges that regulatory policies involve "winners and losers." This got me thinking about recent debates around carbon taxes. For example, Nordhaus (2019) discusses the "social cost of carbon" as a key metric for pricing carbon emissions. Both readings emphasize the importance of these economic tools, yet Nordhaus raises concerns that international agreements often fail due to free-riding—something the U.S. has been guilty of, especially with its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

I also reflected on how these readings challenge my initial perception of climate policy. While I used to think that regulations could easily be justified by their environmental benefits alone, I now see the complexity of balancing costs, equity, and long-term impacts. However, one lingering question I have is how we can incorporate fairness into BCA without undermining its economic rigor. For instance, can we assign more weight to marginalized communities affected by climate change without compromising the analytical framework?